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ABSTRACT

Formulation and forecast via the development of a five-year projection of possible future conditions in the Ontario Federation of School Athletic Associations (OFSAA) through the use of a modified Delphi technique was the purpose of this study. The research represents a survey investigation utilizing knowledgeable representatives of the 83 OFSAA legislative councils. The subjects were asked to identify probable and desirable developments and their impact on interschool sport related to the OFSAA. A plan for future action based on the research tabulated in the body of the paper and suggestions for future investigations on the topic of sports funding vs. institutional autonomy are included. (Author/LH)

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AN EVALUATION AND FORECAST OF FUTURE DIRECTIONS OF THE ONTARIO FEDERATION OF SCHOOL ATHLETIC ASSOCIATIONS (OFSAA)

by

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AN EVALUATION AND FORECAST OF FUTURE DIRECTIONS OF THE ONTARIO FEDERATION OF SCHOOL ATHLETIC ASSOCIATIONS (OFSAA)

This evaluation and forecast represented an exploratory research investigation that utilized a Modified Delphi Technique to develop a five year projection of probable and desirable developments and their impact on OFSAA. By surveying the eighty-three member OFSAA legislative council the alternatives and priorities to three basic questions concerning the development of future directions for OFSAA were evaluated and forecast. The three questions were: (1) What is the probable future direction of the school sport/amateur athletics interface; (2) What is the compatibility of secondary school sport programmes with those of Ontario Sportplan; and (3) What are the major alternatives to change available to the legislators of OFSAA?

The council members were surveyed in two Modified Delphi Opinionnaire rounds for their responses to the identified issues. The response information was analyzed using mean scores, median scores, and semi-interquartile ranges to examine the probability, desirability and impact of the responses. Chi square crosstabulations were determined to identify the degree of association between opinionnaire issues and the respondent's sex, association, role in OFSAA, role in education and geographic orientation in the province.

OFSAA legislators expressed a clear consensus for achievement of an all encompassing programme, maximizing participation and servicing all sport/athletic skill levels. In addition, the legislators indicated that they will remain strongly committed to the existing structure of OFSAA, its goals and means. The issues identified from the OFSAA Constitution and 1976 Women's Committee Report were generally supported as highly desirable and probable. Constituent strain within OFSAA's member associations will increase if the autonomy of individual associations and/or financial independence is challenged. Social stress confronting OFSAA will originate from proposed plans for the unification of sport, such as Ontario Sportplan. Evidence from this study identified Sportplan as an unlikely but viable alternative to change that the legislators of OFSAA must consider. Alternatively the centralization of OFSAA into a government service organization was also considered unlikely but viable. The consequences of these alternatives would increase the probability of OFSAA losing its current identity as a socializing sports organization and would necessitate a shift in membership and organizational structure to the goals and means of athletic excellence.

In conclusion; this evaluation of OFSAA demonstrated a clear preference on the part of OFSAA legislators for a distinct service programme providing an educational experience for all students who participate. This commitment supports the existence of two separate organizations, such as OFSAA and Amateur Sport Association, with separate goals and means rather than an alliance or single government bureaucratic or service organization with similar goals and means.

This study also supports the application of 'futures' research to sport organizations as a complement to on going Research and Development for periodic evaluation of priority goals and problem solving.

IDENTIFICATION - PROPOSED STUDY

In the past, 'futures' research has been largely limited to business and government. The advent of advanced computer programming and analysis techniques now allows a wide variety of organizations access to a large data base and simulation of many organizational parameters. This study applied the Delphi Survey technique to interschool athletics in the Province of Ontario focusing on The Ontario Federation of School Athletic Associations (OFSAA).[1]

Felt Need For The Study

OFSAA offers a unique programme within the area of interschool sport. "It was founded on the premise of co-ordinating, regulating and planning interschool athletic activities for the benefit and welfare of the participants (the secondary students of Ontario)."[2] Over the years since its inception in 1948 the programme has grown rapidly on many fronts. In 1958-59 approximately 31,500 boys participated in interschool sports events, by 1974-75 over 141,000 boys were active in interschool sports.[3] The significance of this growth was compounded by similar developments in the number of sports, length of playing seasons, number of games and the number of teacher/coaches involved in the interschool sports programme. More importantly, however, has been the development of full provincial programmes for both male and female student participants.

Along with the rapid growth and development within interschool sports; several areas of concern were identified at the grass roots level by the coaches, physical and health educators, principals, past and present members of OFSAA's administrative body (the legislative council). Interschool sport has received increased atttention from both the public and various levels of government, provincial and federal in particular. With the escalating costs of operating an interschool sports programme; funding transportation, facilities, equipment, time for facility usage; the need for direction planning and accountability has become vital for the continued success of the interschool sports programme. For example, the OFSAA administrative expenditures have increased from $62,981 in 1970 to $95,440 in 1975-76.[4] More recently, with the heavy emphasis placed on preparation for the 1976 Olympic games, the Canada games, and Sport Ontario, increasing interest has been demonstrated in the development and future of interschool sports.

DELINEATION

This study investigated some of the major issues that members of the OFSAA legislative council will probably face in the next five years.[5] By forming a consensus on the key issues, the answers to several basic questions concerning the development of systematic and strategic planning were evaluated by means of an exploratory, survey research forecast.

Statement of the Problem

The questions investigated in the study were similar to those found in the scope of investigations provided by the Ministry of Education of Ontario for the Sport Institute for Research/Change Agent Research (SIR/CAR) study on "The Role of Interschool Sports in the Secondary Schools of Ontario."[6]

1. What is the probable future direction of the interface of school sport and amateur athletics, specifically Ontario Sportplan and other similar proposed plans for the unification of sport?
2. How compatible are the goals and means of secondary school sport programmes with those of the Ontario Sportplan programmes with regard to socializing sport and athletic excellence?
3. What are the major alternatives available to the legislators of OFSAA in their development of a viable interschool sports programme for the future?

The investigation was designed to provide a list of alternatives and a comparison ranking of these futurities in terms of their probability of occurrence, their perceived desirability, and anticipated impact.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was the formulation of an evaluation and forecast via the development of a five year projection of possible future conditions in OFSAA through the use of a Modified Delphi technique. The study represents an exploratory survey research investigation utilizing knowledgeable representatives,

from the organization, who were asked to identify probable and desirable developments and their impact on interschool sport focusing on OFSAA.

Significance of the Study

The fundamental thesis tested in this investigation is that many of the issues and problems that OFSAA faces today will continue to persist in the future unless an ongoing evaluative process designed to formulate long term plans and policies is developed as an integral part of the organization. This study fulfilled this need by providing a detailed evaluation of OFSAA's future problems and needs.

The second significant contribution this study made was through the introduction of the concept of accountability. In a recent newspaper article Marilyn Parkinson, an OFSAA representative on the legislative council cited two areas of concern regarding scarce resources in the interschool sports programmes of Ontario: "There are schools having problems with gym time for their girls and boys. Throughout the province there is much concern about financing. Every extra activity costs money."[7] After citing the financial and logistic constraints that exist, Marilyn summarized the situation by stating: "In fact, there are some (high school athletic) associations in the province who have already started to cut back in the total number of activities to save money."[8]

Resources are scarce. The costs of interschool sports programmes are increasing constantly. However, few people in education and in particular sport, evaluate and assess precisely what it is they are trying to do for the participant, how they are doing it, at what cost, and with what intended results. Through the development of a long range forecast this study provided the basis for ongoing evaluation (self correction),

sound planning and accountability.

Finally this study furthered the development of the Delphi technique as an effective method of forming a group consensus for the purpose of forecasting future conditions and issues in a volunteer sports organization.

Research and Development

A series of audio interviews were conducted using a Semi Directed Focused Interview technique.[9] Information was sought with regard to the historical background (growth and development) of OFSAA and the past, present and future issues facing the legislative council. Contributions were made by such knowledgeable people as: N.A. 'Pete' Beach, Gordon Wright, George 'Bev' Goulding, Ted Emmerson, Diana Rankin, Dalt White, John Lees, Val Motruk and Helen Gurney. Audio interviews were supported by written material and statistics (minutes, financial statements, reports and briefs) supplied through the Office of the Executive Director of OFSAA.[10]

Experimentation

A series of Modified Delphi opinionnaires were administered to the representatives on the legislative council of OFSAA. The opinionnaire was designed to elicit the issues, attitudes and beliefs most commonly shared by the council members. The initial opinionnaire was 'open ended' in structure. Opinionnaires two and three were designed to form a consensus of opinion on the issues established through response in Opinionnaire One and the Research and Development. The accompanying illustration outlines the operational design of this Modified Delphi study.

STAGE I

Identification Stage

Identify and Develop Opinionnaire Issues

A. Research and Development
1. SDFI AUDIO INTERVIEWS
2. Content analysis of: Minutes, policy statements, Constitution, Finances, Programme Statistics
3. Computer Retrieval
4. Manual Retrieval for: Written, audio-video sources, Past and Present Studies

B. Select Subject Population of 'knowledgeable' respondents i.e. OFSAA Legislative Council
1. Sample Procedure: Entire N sampled (minimum criterion = 2/Association

C. Round One Opinionnaire
1. Opinionnaire One: Open Ended Structure Elicit Issues, Increase interest of respondent

STAGE II

Opinionnaire Rounds Two and Three

Consensus on Issues

D. Opinionnaire Two
1. Selection Issues SIR Model Criterion:
(a) Ultimate Goal,
(b) Conflict or Obstacles
(c) Aims and Objectives
(d) Significant Groups and Individuals
(e) Social Stress
(f) Constituent Strain
(g) Re-organization and Trends
2. Source of Issue:
(a) Constitution
(b) Sportplan
(c) Women's Committee Report
(d) Opinionnaire One
(e) Control
(f) Socializing Sport or Amateur Athletics
3. Scales: Probability, Desirability, Impact

E. Opinionnaire Three
1. Feedback of Frequency Analysis of Opinionnaire Two
2. Six Audio Interviews (Quota Sample) to check objectivity of Opinionnaire issues.

STAGE III

Statistical Analysis

Statistical Treatment

F.1 Frequencies
2. Semi Interquartile
3. Ranges
4. Medians
5. Crosstabulations on Variables:
Sex, Association, Role in Education, Role in OFSAA Geographic Orientation in Province
(Chi Square Statistic)
(α >.05)

STAGE IV

RETURN TO STAGE I

Forecast

Interpretations and Trends

G. Conditions/Priority Lists

H. Alternatives/Explanation

I. Recommendations

J. Dissemination of Results
- to OFSAA (Legislative Council)
- to University Community

OPERATIONAL DESIGN OF THE MODIFIED DELPHI STUDY

EVALUATION

The data obtained in Opinionnaire Two was analyzed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) computer program. A frequency analysis of the response scales was tabulated.

The responses to Opinionnaire Three were analyzed on three independent scales (impact, desirability and probability) for the following comparisons on the SPSS computer program to:

1. Establish the frequency response of the legislative council members under these identification variables; (a) sex (b) association, (c) geographical orientation in the province, (d) role in OFSAA, and (e) role in the school.
2. Crosstabulation of the frequency responses for the comparison of the above mentioned variables (non parametric Chi Square was utilized to distinguish significant differences).
3. Compare the issues in terms of divergence between probability and desirability scores.
4. Compare the issues in terms of probability, desirability and impact scores. The analysis of steps 3 and 4 were conducted through the computation of median scores and semi-interquartile ranges for each issue on each scale. The issues were then placed in rank order based upon their desirability estimates and semi-interquartile ranges. Finally, a priority list of goals and problems was established by comparing the issues in terms of desirability/probability differentials and impact scores.

ACTION-FORECAST

Analysis of the Research and Development audio interviews and written records combined with the results of the Modified Delphi survey formed the basis for the following evaluation and forecast for OFSAA.

The legislators expressed a clear consensus on achieving an all encompassing programme, maximizing participation and servicing all sport/athletic skill levels. The legislators indicated that they will remain strongly committed to the existing structure of OFSAA, its avowed goals and means. The issues identified in the OFSAA Constitution and Women's Committee Report were generally supported as highly desirable and probable. In addition, the following goals received high priority estimates and therefore warrant further examination by the members of OFSAA:

1. The maximization of both male and female participation in inter-school sport.
2. Servicing the secondary school students of Ontario by assisting the coordination of interschool sports throughout the province and by emphasizing the educational benefits of all interschool sports competition.
3. The maintenance of a decentralized mutual benefit/service organizational structure.
4. Recommending standards and practices in conducting secondary school sports.
5. Improving the communication channels and planning procedures within the federation by utilizing survey techniques and services (consultation and evaluative research) provided by colleges and universities.
6. The continued development of a socializing programme of sports.

Constituent strain exists now and will persist within OFSAA in regard to autonomy of associations and financial independence of interschool sport in Ontario. This strain is largely due to the uncertain future governing of these two organizational parameters.

The major source of social stress confronting OFSAA will originate in Ontario Sportplan and other similar proposed plans for the unification of sport. Evidence from this study supports it as an unlikely but viable alternative to change that the legislators of OFSAA may consider.

Based on the priority lists of probable conditions facing OFSAA, four alternatives to change have been identified for the legislative council's consideration. By evaluating the future priorities of OFSAA these four alternatives emerged:

1. The present socializing sport programme and decentralized structure will continue. Financial independence for the associations will be achieved through increased assistance from the local Boards of Education. The probability for increased assistance is considered low, due to the demand of many programmes vying for few available dollars. However, by demonstrating the cost and benefits of the interschool sports programme througn systems analysis techniques, the increased financial resources could be justified and would be forthcoming.
2. In an effort to maintain a broad socializing or educational sports programme the Ministry of Education would assume direct control of the operation and funding of interschool sports in the province. This alternative would centralize control and force complete financial dependence on the associations. It would be a viable

alternative, although unlikely and undesirable. It would provide for the continuation of a separate educational sports programme.

3. The structural changes proposed in Ontario Sportplan would provide a link to amateur sport governing bodies and financial assistance if implemented. However many conflicting aims and objectives exist between Sportplan and OFSAA's expressed strategic goals as identified in this study. These conflicts and obstacles would require compromise which would increase the probability of OFSAA becoming a government bureaucratic, non-voluntary organization. Indeed, the possibility for conflict between OFSAA and Sport Ontario as a result of the implementation of Ontario Sportplan is tremendous in the near future.

4. The complete absorption of OFSAA into the various provincial Sport Governing Bodies. This alternative would likely result in the loss of OFSAA's function as a socializing sport organization. It would demand a shift in membership structure, goals and means. The resultant programme would shift from socializing sport to athletic excellence. In other words the programme would shift from a decentralized structure, fulfilling an educational function to a centralized structure designed to develop a few highly specialized athletes.

Summary

The possible alliance or even absorption of OFSAA into any unifying plan for sport or another government service organization would demand, in this era of accountability, the re-evaluation of the long term or strategic rationale supporting a duplication of programmes on the existence of two competiting service organizations.

The high priority placed on OFSAA Constitution issues, Women's Committee issues and Socializing Sport issues, demonstrated the preference on the part of OFSAA legislators for a distinct service programme offering an educational experience for all students who participate. This commitment supports the existence of separate organizations, such as OFSAA and the many provincial sport governing bodies, with separate goals and means rather than an alliance or single government bureaucratic or service organization with similar goals and means.

Recommendations for Research

By developing a strategic forecast for OFSAA utilizing a Modified Delphi Technique, the foundations for change have been laid in two areas:

1. A better understanding of the organizational structure, goals, tasks, membership and trends in relation to the various alternatives and problem issues will aid the legislators of OFSAA in the generation of strategic plans and policies.
2. By utilizing a Modified Delphi Technique in this study many of the research techniques employed in future research can be applied in (1) forecasting research on sports organizations as a compliment to ongoing Research and Development for periodic evaluation of priority goals, and (2) as a problem-solving process when groups are divided on issues that allow all members in the organization an opportunity to participate, rather than "select another committee."

Future Research

The application of 'futures' research to sports organizations would appear to have great potential. Although the Delphi Technique is a

proven group consensus builder, its ability to forecast for sports/athletic organizations can only be validated via longitudinal study of these predictions. The Delphi technique may prove even more effective for long range forecasts if a casual model based on the variables identified in this exploratory research study can be developed via factor analysis to test these organizational parameters and their relationship in the sports organization.

By establishing a dependent measure such as probability-desirability differentials and the independent variables, future research studies can utilize more appropriate experimental designs with a control panel for validation of a treatment effect.

The Pro Athletic/Amateur Sport Dichotomy SIR Model and the OFSAA Systems Analysis models were employed as guidelines for action in this exploratory study.[11] Their application in future research studies involving sport/athletic organizations may be enhanced through further development and examination which would include the following:

1. Further definition of the Pro Athletic/Amateur Sport Dichotomy and the Systems Analysis Model, followed by examination for their applicability to volunteer organizations and quasi-professional or amateur athletic organizations. For example, by operationally defining the parameters of the model, change can be measured and evaluated using multi-variate regression analysis enabling the researcher to develop a causal model for forecasting purposes.
2. Developing methods of testing these models by quantifying variables such as, the locus of control, remuneration of members, goals, tasks, and structure.

By conducting an exploratory study such as this study, the bases for further research focusing on the synthesis of knowledge as well as the explanation and dissemination of knowledge may be formulated. Several specific studies recommended for future research related to sport/athletic organizations are listed below:

1. A re-audit of OFSAA in 1981 to monitor and evaluate the effect of this current study and the forecasting validity of the Modified Delphi technique.
2. A cost/benefit analysis study of interschool sport in the Province of Ontario to evaluate the effectiveness and efficiency of the present interschool sports programme in Ontario.
3. A study specifically examining the interface of school sport and amateur athletics focusing on the possible justifications for two independent sports organizations in the province.

The Ontario Federation of School Athletic Associations

Based upon the assessments provided by the knowledgeable respondents from the legislative council and an extensive Research and Development it was possible to derive the following recommendations for the members of OFSAA to consider:

1. Organize the necessary Research and Development systems using a Systems Analysis Model as a guide for the collection of empirical data on programme participation, growth and costs. By maintaining a Research and Development system a regular programme evaluation can be conducted. This would lead to improved strategic plans and policies for interschool sport in Ontario.
2. Utilize the services of colleges and universities to conduct

regular evaluation research in cooperation with the various committees and commissions appointed by the legislative council of OFSAA, in particular the continuing commission.

3. Increase communication and participation in the decision-making process throughout the legislative council and all levels of inter-school sport, and reduce the unnecessary expense involved in frequent committee meetings and the loss of valuable time at annual meetings by utilizing the Delphi survey technique to bring the members to consensus on problem issues.
4. Re-assess the costs, aims and objectives of all sports programmes for unnecessary duplication of services both within OFSAA and between OFSAA and the Sport Governing Bodies.

Footnotes

1. The Ontario Federation of School Athletic Associations (OFSAA) consists of 17 member associations comprised of elementary and secondary schools approved by The Ministry of Education of Ontario. The federation was officially organized in 1947 as the provincial representative on interschool sport.

2. Beach, N.A., "Position Statement", given at Legislative Council meeting; Toronto, Ontario, unpublished, June, 1962.

3. Statistics supplied annually by Regional Association Secretaries and collated by the OFSAA Executive Director.

4. OFSAA financial report on administrative expenditures is filed by the Executive Director at the annual legislative council meetings in June of each year.

5. The Legislative Council of The Ontario Federation of School Athletic Associations is composed of representatives of the 17 member associations (four per association), the Women's Committee, The Ontario Secondary School Headmaster's Council, The Ontario Association of Education Administrative Officials, and The Ontario Education Association Physical Education section. The total representation on the council is eighty-three.

6. Moriarty, Dick, Marge Prpich and Ann Marie Guilmette (eds.) The Role of Interschool Sports in the Secondary Schools of Ontario-Focus on SWOSSA of OFSAA. (Windsor, Ontario: University of Windsor Sports Institute for Research/Change Agent Research SIR/CAR Task Force, 1977). The Ministry of Education of Ontario, Toronto, will publish this report in the fall of 1978.

7. Parkinson, M., "Ken Fathers Disagreed with Abby," Windsor Star: (Windsor, Ontario: February 3, 1977), 22.

8. Ibid.

9. For a more indepth description of the Semi-Directed Focused Interview (SDFI) technique see, "The Role of Interschool Sports in the Secondary Schools of Ontario - Focus on SWOSSA of OFSAA," 128-130.

10. These sources are available in the OFSAA office in Toronto. Microfilm and xerox photocopies are also contained in The University of Windsor Library Sports Archives and are available by interlibrary loan.

11. For a more indepth description and analyses (Tables, Charts, and Illustrations) contact the University of Windsor Library for a complete copy of this thesis study.